

REMARKS

As stated above, this Amendment Pursuant to 37 C.F.R. §1.114 is being filed subsequent to a Notice of Allowance and Issue Fee Due of December 23, 2003, but before payment was made of the Issue Fee and in support of the Request for Continued Examination ("RCE") under 37 C.F.R. §1.114 which is filed concurrently herewith. Accordingly, Applicants note that pursuant to 37 C.F.R. §1.313(a) no petition to withdraw the application from issue is required. Entry of this Amendment is respectfully requested prior to further examination on the merits.

As indicated in the Notice of Allowability, all of the pending claims (i.e., claims 1-4 and 7-35) had been allowed. By this Amendment. Claims 1, 2, 3, 4, 7, 8, 9-22 are amended. New claims 36 and 37 are added. No new matter has been added by this Preliminary Amendment.

Applicants believe that all of the pending claims as herein amended and new claims are believed allowable for at least similar reasons as in the Notice of Allowance.

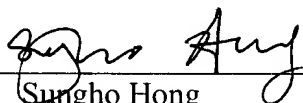
AUTHORIZATION

No petitions or additional fees are believed due for this amendment and/or any accompanying submissions. However, to the extent that any additional fees and/or petition is required, including a petition for extension of time, Applicants hereby petition the Commissioner to grant such petition, and hereby authorizes the Commissioner to charge any additional fees, including any fees which may be required for such petition, or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 13-4500 (Order No. 1232-4750). A DUPLICATE COPY OF THIS SHEET IS ENCLOSED.

An early and favorable examination on the merits is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,
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Dated: March 23, 2004

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